



JUDITH B. ROBSON

STATE SENATOR • WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE
CHAIR, HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING COMMITTEE
CO-CHAIR, JOINT COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging

Re: Paper Ballots

Date: March 10, 2000

Attached please find paper ballots on the following bills:

- SB 353, relating to funding grants from DHFS to food pantries;
- SB 407, relating to licensure of occupational therapists and creating an affiliated credentialing board;
- SB 413, relating to the sale of cigarettes not intended for consumption in the United States;
- SB 418, relating to placement of a child for adoption outside the county where the child is located; and
- SB 419, relating to authorizing a person who determines eligibility for MA to review and update the existing records of an MA applicant, regardless of whether the applicant's case has been assigned to the person making the eligibility determination.

Please return your ballots to me no later than noon on Monday, March 13, 2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Paper Ballot on Senate Bill 353

Senate Bill 353 makes an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million for grants from DHFS to food pantries. Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of people served by each pantry. Twenty-five percent of the total is to go to rural pantries. No single grant may exceed \$15,000.

Moved by: Senator Robson

Motion: Recommend passage

☒ Aye

☐ No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Robert Winch
3-13-00

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Paper Ballot on Senate Bill 353

Senate Bill 353 makes an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million for grants from DHFS to food pantries. Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of people served by each pantry. Twenty-five percent of the total is to go to rural pantries. No single grant may exceed \$15,000.

Moved by: Senator Robson

Motion: Recommend passage

☐ Aye

☒ No

Signature: _____

Carol Raessler

Date: _____

3-13-00

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Paper Ballot on Senate Bill 353

Senate Bill 353 makes an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million for grants from DHFS to food pantries. Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of people served by each pantry. Twenty-five percent of the total is to go to rural pantries. No single grant may exceed \$15,000.

Moved by: Senator Robson

Motion: Recommend passage

☒ Aye

☐ No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Peggy Rosenzweig
3/13/00

OK

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Paper Ballot on Senate Bill 353

Senate Bill 353 makes an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million for grants from DHFS to food pantries. Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of people served by each pantry. Twenty-five percent of the total is to go to rural pantries. No single grant may exceed \$15,000.

Moved by: Senator Robson

Motion: Recommend passage

☒ Aye

☐ No

Signature:

Date: March 13, 2000

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Paper Ballot on Senate Bill 353

Senate Bill 353 makes an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million for grants from DHFS to food pantries. Grants are to be made in proportion to the number of people served by each pantry. Twenty-five percent of the total is to go to rural pantries. No single grant may exceed \$15,000.

Moved by: Senator Robson

Motion: Recommend passage

☒ Aye

☐ No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

HAT

Hunger Action Team

201 South Hawley Court
Milwaukee, WI 53214
Phone: 414-777-0483
Fax: 414-777-0480

March 8, 2000

State Senator Judy Robson, Chair
Committee on Human Services and Aging
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

The Hunger Action Team (HAT) is writing in support of Senate Bill 353, a bill that would provide funding for food pantries in Wisconsin. We are pleased that you have scheduled this important piece of legislation for a public hearing.

HAT is a group of advocates committed to fighting the causes of hunger and poverty in Milwaukee County. Many of HAT's members are active in directly alleviating hunger as volunteers or staff at emergency feeding organizations. They are concerned about the steady increase in the number of low-income people needing emergency assistance. HAT believes that Senate Bill 353 would provide a necessary resource for food pantries to respond to this increasing need of emergency food. Many HAT members have begun to determine how they would use this potential funding source to improve their food pantries.

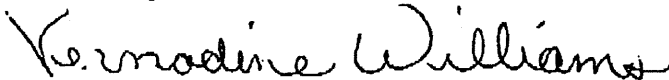
One example of a Milwaukee agency with a food pantry is United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), which is located in the heart of the near south side of Milwaukee where there is a large Hispanic community. Much of their staff is bilingual, because of this they have been able to provide an environment that is comfortable for the Spanish speaking population. The UMOS staff also has been very successful in acquiring food through various sources such as Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, the federal commodities program, and local food drives. Unfortunately, those sources do not always provide the culturally specific foods needed to serve much of their clientele. Senate Bill 353 would be able to provide an additional resource to help this program provide much needed food.

Another example of a food pantry is Providence Baptist Church Food Pantry, located in the basement of the church's Multicultural Center. This program continues to operate by a staff of committed volunteers. They are grateful for the space that is generously donated to them; however the facility greatly needs updating. With the funding provided by Senate Bill 353, Providence would be able to purchase additional shelving units needed for proper food storage and a portable conveyor to help these volunteers get the food into the basement where the pantry is located.

Much of the general public may think that the issues of hunger and poverty do not exist in suburban communities but Project Concern sees first hand that it does. For 32 years they have been providing food, clothing, and referrals to other services throughout Cudahy and St. Francis. Often times during brief interviews with clients other issues beyond emergency food needs are made known. Senate Bill 353 would provide funding to allow Project Concern to expand their capacity to provide services such as: nutrition education, budget counseling, computer classes, substance abuse support groups and mental health counseling.

These are just three examples of the many ways that Senate Bill 353 would improve the work that food pantries are doing to fight hunger. We respectfully hope you pass this bill to allow us to continue and expand this fight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vernadine Williams". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Vernadine Williams
Chairperson



ECHOinc.

317 DODGE ST.
JANESVILLE, WI 53545
PHONE: (608) 754-5333

Everyone Cooperating To Help Others, Inc.

March 9, 2000

Senator Judith Robson
15 South, State Capitol
P. O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

I applaud and appreciate the concern you have shown to area providers of service to the low-income population in our area when you attend our Poverty Response Team of Rock County meetings. Today, I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 353. I am unable to speak in support of it at today's hearing at the State Capitol, due to work responsibilities and conflicts.

The attached "ECHO Services—1999 vs.1998; 1999 vs. 1997" report reflects the increase in services in the last couple years, which continued a significant growing trend since 1995/96. The estimated monetary value of our services delivered in 1999 is contained in the attached "Dollars & Sense" report. The "ECHO Service Report—February 2000" shows that this trend is continuing into the current year. Keep in mind that these reports reflect only what we have been able to do to meet essential emergency needs of the low-income population in our area, not the much larger need.

The need is increasing at a time when government funding is getting tighter. The working poor is a growing population. The majority of our clients make an average of \$6,000-\$12,000 (individuals) to \$12,000-\$20,000 (couples & families) gross income per year.

Welfare rolls are declining, and unemployment is down. Yet individuals and families struggling to support themselves on low wages, part-time, or temporary jobs, or people who can't work or can't get jobs they have the skills to handle, are turning to ECHO in increasing numbers and increasing frequency.

We have over 4000 households on our current records, over 6000 households factoring in 1995-present. From our rent assistance data, 75% have children. About 65% of those w/children are headed by females.

(over)

SOCIAL SERVICES SPONSORED BY THE FOLLOWING CHURCHES:

Afton Community Church
All Saints Anglican
Asbury United Methodist
Cargill United Methodist
Christ Presbyterian
Emerald Grove UCC
Faith Community Church
Faith Lutheran
First Baptist

First Christian
First Congregational UCC
First Lutheran
First Presbyterian
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Grace Tabernacle
Harvest Community
Mt. Calvary Lutheran
Mt. Zion United Methodist

New Hope Lutheran
New Life Assembly of God
Orchard View Alliance
Our Savior Lutheran
Randolph Park Nazarene
Rock Prairie United Presbyterian
Roxbury Road Church of Christ
St. John Lutheran
St. John Vianney Catholic

St. Mark Lutheran
St. Mary Catholic
St. Patrick Catholic
St. Paul Lutheran
St. Peter Lutheran
St. William Catholic
Southside Baptist
Trinity Episcopal
Trinity Free Lutheran

We are probably most widely known as being a food pantry. In 1999, ECHO provided 4,940 food orders to 14,247 people, about 260,000 meals. We also provided Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas meal, along with emergency restaurant meals, our monthly community meal, and food to six area school breakfast clubs and to smaller pantries in the outlying areas. Besides all of the donated goods, we spent over \$35,000 on food in 1999.

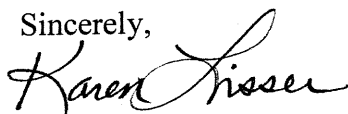
One segment of the low-income population we serve is the homeless population—children, women, and men; singles, couples, and families. This group goes relatively unnoticed in Janesville. Many of them are living in motels on vouchers from us. ECHO provided 7,421 shelter nights in 1999, at a cost of \$64,800. During this time, we had severe cutbacks in this and other of our services all of June, September, October, and November. That is still a 121% increase in shelter nights over the same period in 1998.

We try to prevent homelessness by offering emergency rent assistance, or security deposit assistance. We provided up to one month's rent to 254 families in 1999. We spent \$108,000 to do so. In 1998, we were able to help 312 families with up to one month's rent. As stated before, we had major service cutbacks four months in 1999, due to a shortage of funds.

Food, Lodging and Rent Assistance are just three of our many services. Some of our other major services are: Clothing; Furniture; Personal and Household Supplies (which cost us only administrative costs); Bus, Gas and Medical Supplies/Prescription Assistance (which are cost-intensive). See our "Dollars & Sense" report for additional details.

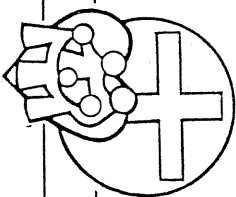
If you have any questions about the information I have provided, feel free to call me at (608) 754-5333 or fax me at (608) 754-9199. Thank you for the wonderful job you are doing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Lisser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" being more prominent than the last name "Lisser".

Karen Lisser
Executive Director

Attachments



ECHO SERVICES--1999 vs. 1998; 1999 vs. 1997

SERVICES	YTD '99	1999 vs. '98	1999 vs. '97
Food/Groceries--Total People	14,247 people	5% increase	15% increase
Food Orders (Households)--Total	4,940 orders	3% increase	9% increase
Food--Pantries, Brkfst. Clubs, Agencies, Groups	2,118 grocery bags	n/a	n/a
Baby Food/Formula/Diapers	885 babies	1% decrease	11% decrease
Clothing, Housewares/Annex--People	12,657 people	16% decrease	11% decrease
Families Served	4,184 families	19% decrease	18% decrease
Personal & Household--Supplies	4,206 people	424% increase	999+ increase
Furniture & Appliances	490 families	29% increase	262% increase
Emergency Lodging/Motels--Shelter Nights	7,421 shelter nts.	52% increase	121% increase
Nights of Lodging Provided	4,033 nights	33% increase	84% increase
People Given Lodging	1,062 people	48% increase	93% increase
Emergency Restaurant Meals	283 meals	528% increase	999+ increase
Rent & Security Deposits	254 families	23% decrease	26% increase
Community Meals	755 meals	14% decrease	8% decrease
Medical/Prescriptions/Eyeglasses	645 people	999+ increase	999+ increase
Gasoline	374 people	9% decrease	32% increase
Bus Transportation	376 people	32% decrease	7% increase
Commodities	4,313 families	4% increase	239% increase
Petty Cash	44 people	10% increase	10% increase
Toys/Presents-Office	29 children	21% increase	52% increase
Miscellaneous Services	135 people	165% increase	78% increase
Referrals	1200 estimated	same	same
Easter Baskets (Girl Scouts)	187 children	5% decrease	14% increase
Easter Brunch Certificate Program	905 children	n/a	n/a
School Supplies--children/families	481 children	36% increase	19% increase
Thanksgiving Baskets--people/families	2,435 people/600 families	132% increase	n/a
Holiday Grocery Certificates	50 families	170% decrease	19% increase
Christmas Trees/Decorations	74 families	68% increase	270% increase
Christmas Day Dinner	752 people	1% increase	11% decrease
Christmas Toys	692 children	22% increase	24% decrease
Christmas Adopt-a-Family (People/Families)	266 people/62 families	6% increase	37% increase
TOTAL UNITS OF SERVICE	56,274 units	21% increase	44% increase

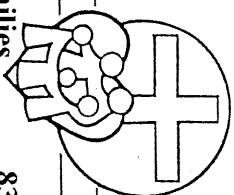
ECHO "Dollars & Sense" Report--1999 Services

Conservative estimates of the value of in-kind donations are given. This report does not break down staff hours into time spent w/clients (such as time spent in direct asst. for HCRI, FEMA, SSSG funds) vs. admin. tasks. Other expenses include: wages (7-8 staff, 5.75-6.0 FTE's), insurance, equipment, maintenance, supplies, utilities, rent, postage, phones, accounting & professional fees, etc. ECHO has two sites. The office at 317 Dodge St. is provided rent-free by First Congregational Church. We pay a \$650/mo. maintenance fee (included in operating expenses) to Trinity Episcopal Church for the annex food pantry and clothing center at 419 E. Court St. It should be noted that rent, lodging, bus and gas services were cut off in June, September, October, and November, due to a shortage of funds.

Service Description	Services Given	Funds Spent ECHO, HCRI, FEMA & SSSG	Estimated Value In-Kind Donations	Total Direct Asst.
Food Orders	14,247 people/4,940 orders	\$ 35,300 (ECHO \$34,400; FEMA \$900)	\$ 284,940	\$ 320,240
Food--Panties, Brkfst. Clubs, etc.	2,118 grocery bags		\$ 42,360	\$ 42,360
Baby Food/Diapers	885 babies		\$ 8,850	\$ 8,850
Clothing, Household--Annex	12,657 people/4,184 families	<i>see also Miscellaneous Services</i>	\$ 506,280	\$ 506,280
Furniture & Appliances, Car	490 families		\$ 52,000	\$ 52,000
Personal, Household--Supplies	4,206 people		\$ 63,090	\$ 63,090
Emergency Lodging	7,421 shelter nights	\$ 64,800 (ECHO \$48,700; SSSG \$14,600; FEMA-\$1,500)		\$ 64,800
Emergency Restaurant Meals	283 meals	<i>see also Food Orders</i>	\$ 1,415	\$ 1,415
Rent & Security Deposits	254 families	\$108,000 (ECHO \$3,800; FEMA 8,500; HCRI 23,000; CDBG-22,700)		\$ 108,000
Community Meals	755 meals		\$ 7,550	\$ 7,550
Prescriptions, First Aid Supplies, etc.	645 people	\$ 16,900	\$ 1,935	\$ 18,835
Gasoline	374 people	\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500
Bus	376 people	\$ 5,100	\$ 160	\$ 5,260
Commodities	4,313 families		\$ 64,695	\$ 64,695
Petty Cash	44 people	\$ 240		\$ 240
Miscellaneous Services	135 people	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,350	\$ 11,350
Toys/Presents--Office	29 children		\$ 580	\$ 580
Easter Baskets, Girl Scouts	187 children		\$ 3,740	\$ 3,740
Easter Certificates	905 people	<i>see Food Orders</i>		
Referrals	1,200 estimated		\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
School Supplies	481 children	<i>see also Miscellaneous Services</i>	\$ 9,620	\$ 9,620
Thanksgiving Baskets	2,435 people	<i>see also Food Orders</i>	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Christmas Toys	692 children	<i>see also Miscellaneous Services</i>	\$ 20,760	\$ 20,760
Christmas Trees, Decorations, etc.	74 families		\$ 1,480	\$ 1,480
Christmas Adopt-a-Family	266 people/62 families		\$ 10,640	\$ 10,640
Christmas Dinner	752 people	<i>see also Food Orders</i>	\$ 7,520	\$ 7,520
Grocery Certificates	50 families		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Direct Asst. to Clients	56,274 service units	\$242,840 (ECHO \$171,400; Petty \$240; Other \$71,200)	\$1,101,965	\$1,344,805
Volunteer Hours--9,800 hours			\$ 98,000	\$ 98,000
Donated Mileage, Trucking			\$ 12,700	\$ 12,700
Office Space @ \$600/mo.			\$ 7,200	\$ 7,200
Total Direct Asst. to Clients		\$242,840 (ECHO \$171,400; Petty \$240; Other \$71,200)	\$1,219,865	\$1,462,705
Operating Expenses		\$131,800 (ECHO Funds only)		

Actual Dollars Spent--\$374,640 (ECHO \$303,200; Petty \$240; Other \$71,200). Value of In-Kind Donations--\$1,219,865. Total--\$1,594,505

Administration Ratio: Operating Expenses--\$131,800/Total Spent & In-Kind Donations--\$1,594,505 = 8.27%



ECHO SERVICE REPORT--February 2000

Service Description	Current Month	YTD 2000	YTD 1999
FOOD SERVICES			
Groceries (Annex & Ofc.)--People/Families	830 peo./296 fam.	1,942 peo./662 fam.	2,088 people
Annex/Office Pantries--People Served	792 peo./38 peo.	1,822 peo./120 peo.	1,857 peo./231 peo.
Food--Pantries, Breakfast Clubs, Agencies	438 grocery bags	564 grocery bags	465 grocery bags
Baby Food/Formula	12 babies	29 babies	n/a (see diapers)
Emergency Restaurant Meals	26 meals	40 meals	17 meals
Community Meals	78 meals	152 meals	179 meals
Grocery Certificates	4 families	8 families	0 families
Commodities	277 families	612 families	686 families
Easter Brunch Certificate Program	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Thanksgiving Baskets--people/families	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Christmas Day Dinner	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD SERVICES			
Clothing, Housewares--People/Families	948 peo./237 fam.	2,089 peo./574 fam.	1,966 peo./650 fam.
Diapers (dozen ea.)	32 babies	75 babies	122 babies (incl.food)
Personal & Household--Supplies	374 people	1,042 people	199 people
Furniture & Appliances	18 families	47 families	29 families
HOUSING SERVICES			
Emergency Lodging/Motels--Shelter Nights	255 shelter nts.	575 shelter nts.	998 shelter nts.
Nights of Lodging/People Served	181 nts./40 peo.	352 nts./89 peo.	638 nts./129 peo.
Rent & Security Deposits	16 families	41 families	44 families
Utilities Assistance	3 families	3 families	n/a
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Gasoline	22 families	42 families	74 families
Bus--Local & Out-of-Town Service	41 people	91 people	62 people
Auto Parts, Supplies, Repair	0 families	0 families	n/a
Cars/Bicycles	0 car	1 car	n/a
MEDICAL/HEALTH SERVICES			
Prescriptions/First Aid Supplies	37 Rx's/people	90 Rx's/people	43 Rx's/people
Other Medical/Health Services	1 people	1 people	n/a
OTHER SERVICES			
Petty Cash	1 people	2 people	7 people
Toys/Birthday Presents-Office	0 children	1 children	5 children
Miscellaneous Services	0 people	1 people	5 people
Referrals	100 estimated	200 estimated	200 estimated
School Supplies--children/families	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Easter Baskets (Girl Scouts)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Christmas Trees/Decorations	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Christmas Toys	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
Christmas Adopt-a-Family (People/Families)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)	n/a (seasonal)
TOTAL UNITS OF SERVICE	3,513 units	7,648 units	7,189 units

**RACINE/KENOSHA
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.**

72 Seventh Street, Racine, WI 53403
Phone: (414) 637-8377

2000 63rd Street, Kenosha, WI 53140
Phone: (414) 657-0840

March 8, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson and Committee Members:

We are writing in support of SB 353, the "Food Pantry Bill". Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency coordinates The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in Kenosha and Racine Counties. This program distributes federal food to participating local food pantries. Last fall we completed a comparison of food pantry usage 97/99 in Kenosha County and found a 37% increase. This increase appears to be comparable to increases seen throughout the State.

That so many Wisconsin families should need to use food pantries at a time when Wisconsin is experiencing the greatest economic prosperity in over thirty years is truly shameful.

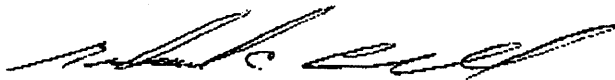
SB 353 is a temporary approach to address this problem. We must develop strategies that reduce demand for emergency food. In the interim, SB 353 would at least help food pantries meet the immediate food needs of our low-income citizens.

We urge you to support SB 353.

Please feel free to contact me at (262) 657-0840, ext. 11, if I can be of further help.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Lill
Kenosha Director of Program Operations





Central Wisconsin Community Action Council, Inc.

205 EAST LAKE AVENUE • POST OFFICE BOX 570 • LAKE DELTON, WISCONSIN 53940

PHONE: (608) 254-8353

• FAX: (608) 254-4327

March 9, 2000

TO: Wisconsin Community Action Program Association/

FROM: Fred Hebert


RE: Senate Bill 353

Without food pantries in the state of Wisconsin, our social problems among the poorest would be ineffable. The tax dollars savings for other programs are enormous because of the availability of food pantries that feed hundreds of households each year. Senate Bill 353 recognizes this critical service by enhancing community agencies such as ours to better provide for the deprived.

This legislation is an expression that our state government is committed and truly concerned with social issues and improving our ability to reach those in need.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

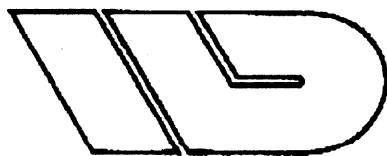
ADAMS COUNTY
 Adams County Job Center
 190 S. Main St. - P.O. Box 158
 Adams, WI 53910
 (608) 339-9559

COLUMBIA COUNTY
 Columbia County Job Center
 717 E. Cook St.
 Portage, WI 53901
 (608) 742-4181

DODGE COUNTY
 Lakeview Wellness Center
 208 LaCrosse St. - P.O. Box 671
 Beaver Dam, WI 53916
 (920) 885-9559

JUNEAU COUNTY
 534B LaCrosse St.
 P.O. Box 253
 Mauston, WI 53948
 (608) 847-1124

SAUK COUNTY
 Sauk County Job Center
 1000 Log Lodge Court
 Baraboo, WI 53913
 (608) 353-3140



Western Dairyland
Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 45
Independence, WI 54747
(715) 985-2391
1-800-782-1063
FAX (715) 985-3239

March 6, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson and Committee Members,

Western Dairyland EOC would like to urge your support for Bill SB 353 to provide \$1.5 million a year for food pantries in Wisconsin. These funds would help food pantries in our rural area feed the 700 plus households that depend on the pantries to feed their families.

In a recent survey of clients that used the pantries many responded that the help they received from the food pantries allowed their families to eat more nutritional balanced meals. In the survey they also said that they saved money in their food budget, allowing them to purchase needed medication and medical care.

Food pantries are having a hard time keeping their shelves full and need your help in feeding the families they serve. Most of the households they serve are elderly or families with small children, a population that does not have the resources available to meet their needs.

In Bill SB 353 there are also funds available to help rural pantries that are struggling to feed the families, as there are limited resources available in their area. Since our agency works with the rural pantries we are well aware of their struggle to keep the shelves full and provide the needed services. The additional funds in this bill will help them continue serving the families that depend on them.

The food pantry staff, volunteers and local agencies are counting on your support to assist the families in our area.

Thank you, for your consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Angie Wiersgalla
Food Pantry Coordinator

James W. Schwartz, Executive Director

Your Community Action Agency Serving: Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, and Trempealeau Counties since 1966

"WORKING TOWARD THE ELIMINATION OF POVERTY IN
BARRON, CHIPPEWA, DUNN, PEPIN, PIERCE, POLK AND
ST. CROIX COUNTIES."



March 8, 2000

Peter H. Kilde
Executive Director

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB 353 the food pantry bill that is being sponsored by Senator Gary George. This bill would greatly increase the chances of food pantries in our seven county service area reach clients that otherwise would not have access to the services.

Examples of this would include longer hours of operation, evening and/or weekend hours as well as more frequent outreach measures. Due to many factors such as pantries being in a rural area and not having enough staff to keep pantries open during regular non-working hours, many clients are blocked with barriers to services that pantries provide. There is also a high need for case-management (trained case managers). These individuals would help households in need find ways to become more self-sufficient or locate other needed services besides the food pantry.

Pantries are in a position where we no longer can completely count on volunteers to efficiently run and coordinate the pantries by themselves. In the past few years the pantries have become a way of life for hard working families and elderly on fixed incomes. It no longer is an "emergency service" rather it is a way to make ends meet. We need your help to continue and improve the operations of food pantries especially in our small rural communities.

Most pantries in our western Wisconsin counties need to completely rely on community and religious support. The extra dollars that this bill could bring to our service area would greatly enhance the services provided by food pantries as well as reach those that are faced with barriers.

West CAP of West Central Wisconsin supports the passage of SB 353.

Warmest Regards,

Melissa J. Wyss C.S.W.

Food & Nutrition Coordinator West CAP



SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.

149 N. Iowa Street, Dodgeville, WI 53533

Voice: (608) 935-2326 Fax: (608) 935-2876

February 25, 2000

FEB 28 2000

Jackie Lawrence, Director
WISCAP
1310 Mendota St. Suite 107
Madison, WI 53714

Dear Jackie,

At their February 24, 2000 meeting, Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program Board of Directors moved to support Senate bill SB353. Please include Southwest CAP as an organization endorsing the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Strand".

Dick Strand
Executive Director

**Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc.**

1717 N. Stoughton Rd. / Madison, WI 53704-2605 / (608) 246-4730 / FAX (608) 246-4760 / TTY (608) 246-4768
114 E. Main St. / Watertown, WI 53094 / (920) 262-9667 / FAX (920) 262-9559

March 9, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson and Committee Members:

On behalf of Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc., I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 353, which would provide assistance to food pantries around the state. Our agency is very active in hunger prevention in Dane, Jefferson, and Waukesha Counties. We work closely with the members of the Dane County Food Pantry Network and are aware of the high level of need among low-income households for the support provided by food pantries.

A recent survey of pantries in Dane County showed that almost a third were working full-time or more than full-time, but still did not earn enough to meet their family's nutritional needs. About a third reported a disability that affected their ability to work. Single parents, most of whom were mothers, made up half of all respondents. The survey illustrated the importance of the food pantries to a wide range of families and individuals struggling to make ends meet.

While it is vital that we foster strategies that reduce poverty in the long run, we need to ensure proper nutrition for children and other low-income people immediately. Food pantries and their thousands of volunteers are at the front lines in this important effort. In spite of the level of prosperity in Wisconsin, many remain in need. We urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Pierce
Executive Director

Equal Opportunity Employer





1201 Main Street, Oconto, WI 54153-1541 • (920) 834-4621 • (800) 242-7334 • Fax: (920) 834-4887

March 8, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members,

NEWCAP, Inc., a Community Action Agency, with offices in Oconto, Marinette and Crandon, directly operates three food pantries that handle TEFAP food items, as well as donated and purchased food. In addition our agency provides training, support and commodities to another 20 volunteer food pantries in Northeast Wisconsin, almost all in rural areas.

Last year, in addition to the \$52,000 grant to operate this very much needed program in our service area, NEWCAP, Inc. spent an additional \$46,471 of its own resources to make it work. We expect the agency's financial involvement to increase again this year because of the high number of low-income elderly that are accessing the pantry system. Partly, that's because elderly with fixed incomes are seeing more of their money going to drug prescriptions, leaving less available for food!

While our agency does not particularly want to be in the retail food business, because of the need, and the opportunity to leverage resources like Second Harvest, local food drives and other contributions, our agency is committed to feeding the hungry. It would be very helpful if we were to receive the additional assistance that SB353 would provide. On behalf of NEWCAP, Inc. and the low-income people we serve, we support this bill and hope it will soon become law.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Koller
Executive Director
NEWCAP, Inc.

Job Center/NEWCAP
325 N. Roosevelt
Green Bay, WI 54301
(920) 448-6463

Crandon Office
212 N. Lake St.
Crandon, WI 54520
(715) 478-3871

Marinette Office
801 Wells St.
P.O. Box 1132
Marinette, WI 54143
(715) 732-4171



Shalom Center of the Interfaith Network

1713 - 62nd Street • Kenosha, Wisconsin 53143-4469

(414) 658-1713 • FAX (414) 657-6914

March 8, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask for your support of Senator Gary George's SB 353, which provides \$1.5 million for food pantries in Wisconsin. This funding is important to the Shalom Center and other pantries based on the increases we have already seen due, at least partially, to welfare reform. The Shalom Center saw a 35% increase in pantry usage in 1999 over 1998. We are currently serving between 950 and 1000 families each month, a year ago we served 700.

We have been concerned about the changes to the food stamp program and how we once again will see more families coming to us for food as we did after welfare reform. The Shalom Center and the community have continued to meet the increased utilization but we are concerned about how long this will be the case. If numbers continue to increase I am not sure if we will be able to respond as we are already finding it difficult to meet the current need. An important fact is that we operate the food pantry totally on donations, both of food and money to pay for staff wages. We also are fortunate to have several volunteers that assist us. We do not receive grant money or funding from any source other than community contributions for our food pantry operations. However we do receive some food each month through the government commodities program, but this is a small amount compared to what we distribute in total and is a separate program from our Food Pantry. We believe it is time for government to become a partner in paying for some of the costs we incur in assisting those citizens that need our food pantry.

Due to the large increase in program participants and the resulting increase in the volume of food we must process staff workloads have also increased significantly. Our Board of Directors has been discussing this situation for several months and we are facing tough decisions about how we continue to meet this demand. Food pantry utilization has outgrown our current resources. We need additional staff and a larger building to deliver the services we currently provide. The possibility of not accepting any new participants, limiting participation time, further limiting the amount of food per family are all just some of the issues facing the Shalom Center and those we serve at this time.

We are strongly in favor of Senate Bill 353 and thank you for your support on this issue. If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Dan H. Melyon
Executive Director



A United Way Member Agency

First Congregational Church

Pastor Donald A. Ehler
Church Phone (608) 489-2492
Parsonage (608) 489-3114



February 17, 2000

WISCAP
1310 Mendota St.
Suite #107
Madison, WI 53714

RE: Adding Name to Endorsing Bill SB353

Dear Sir,

Thanks for your letter of February 17, 2000, informing us of Senator Gary George's Senate Bill #SB353 to provide 1.5 million a year for food pantries.

Please include us as one endorsing Bill #SB353.

We have an excellent work here in Hillsboro providing needed food from our food pantry and about seven/eight cities neighboring us. We have our own Store open five days a week.

Our address is "Good Samaritan" Thrift Store/Food Pantry, c/o Rev. Donald Ehler, PO Box 389, 841 Water Ave., Hillsboro, WI 54634.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Donald Ehler

DAE:jah

620 High Avenue • P.O. Box 389 • Hillsboro, WI 54634

Reaching out to meet the needs of the family



2000 DeKoven Ave.
Racine, WI 53403-2481
Voice: 262-632-2307
Fax: 262-632-2643
Email: rcpe@rootcom.net



March 8, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Honorable Senators,

We write this letter to you expressing our support of Senate Bill 353. Our food bank helps to support 20 food pantries, 11 shelters and 8 meal programs in Racine County and we need help! Our food pantries have frequently been buried by demand and some have had to close temporarily because they ran out of food! We understand you have a chance to help.

We track the demographics of the people who need our food pantry network and we have found that over 24% of the adults served are working but they have more month than money! More than 800 families are served through our emergency food pantry network here in Racine County each month and almost 1/2 of the people in those families are children less than 17 years old!

We also have a consistent number of seniors (people older than 55 years) who need the food pantries to survive. There is another significant group of our neighbors who are disabled and need our help through the food pantry network to avoid starvation.

Our food bank funding comes from United Way, FEMA, TEFAP and lots of fundraising/food drives and a bunch of begging and with all of the help we receive there are still people who go hungry each day here in Wisconsin. Our food bank would not qualify for the funds from this bill, but it would help our emergency food network pantries be able to offer more food and maybe help more children go to bed each night without hunger pains.

Won't you please support sending some of our State's money to help our neighbors who need it? We shouldn't have children going to be hungry here in Wisconsin! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Berger
Executive Director

C: Senators Plache, Wirsch & Lazich, Reps. Turner, Lehman, Ladwig, Porter, Stone, Gunderson
Hunger Task Force, Second Harvest
RCFB Affiliates

Visit the Food Bank & Thoughts For Food Web Sites
<http://rootsites.com/rcpe> and <http://mightvhost.com/tff>



Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc.

1717 N. Stoughton Rd. / Madison, WI 53704-2605 / (608) 246-4730 / FAX (608) 246-4760 / TTY (608) 246-4768
114 E. Main St. / Watertown, WI 53094 / (920) 262-9667 / FAX (920) 262-9559

March 7, 2000

Senator Judy Robson and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson and Committee Members:

The Dane County Food Pantry Network is a safety net for many low income families every month. With the cuts in available resources by the Federal Government, the ability for food pantries to provide food is getting more difficult. In addition to the Government cuts, the demand for food in Dane County continues to grow. To deal with the increase in the number of families and the decrease in available resources (both money and food), pantries have been forced to address new issues. These issues include reducing the amount of food that is distributed to each family and/or creative marketing to increase individual donations.

The Food Pantry Bill (SB 353) would be a good way to help food pantries meet the increased demand for food. In this time of great prosperity in the state of Wisconsin, it would be a shame if the low income were not helped. I believe that the Government should and can rely on charitable service providers to help those in need. However, I also think the Government has some responsibility to help those service providers. This bill is one good way the Government can help the service providers and thus help those in need.

On behalf of the Dane County Food Pantry Network I voice my whole hearted support for this bill and hope that you will do the same.

Sincerely,

David Lamken

David Lamken
Chairperson, Dane County Food Pantry Network



Equal Opportunity Employer



To: Jon Janowski

To the members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging:

I had intended to be here this morning to provide testimony in favor of SB 353, but because of an illness am unable to attend. However, I feel that it is imperative to inform you of the need we see in Waukesha County.

I am the director of the Food Pantry of Waukesha County. Citizens of our county are often surprised that a food pantry is necessary in one of the most affluent counties in our state. We are one of 12 pantries in the county; our pantry is the largest. When I started this position in 1997, the pantry celebrated its 19th year of service to the community and served approximately 3,000 clients per month. This client count included men, women and children. Our monthly client count has, over the last 14 months, increased to approximately 3,400 people per month.

Our Pantry is funded through a small grant through Community Development Block Grant, occasional support from Community Service Block Grant, and private contributions. Over \$600,000 worth of food is distributed annually, approximately 3% of the food is donated. At this time, food purchases include canned and frozen meat products, cereal, powdered milk, canned fruits and vegetables, soup, and baby food. A recent survey of our clients indicated that pure fruit juice, milk, eggs, cheese, and additional protein sources are needed. While we have freezer and cooler space to accommodate these necessary items, we are unable to purchase them because of lack of funding.

This information only tells part of the story. Day after day, we talk to clients who work full-time jobs; single moms earning what they believe to be a dream wage of \$9.00 per hour. After childcare costs of \$200.00 + per week for two children, that "dream" wage is eaten up often before the utilities are paid and certainly before enough food is purchased for the family. This week, a distraught mother asked for help. She was two days early to pick up her food and asked if we would allow her to be early. You see, she had lost her job because her 1-year-old had too many ear infections. Day care wouldn't take her, and the mom's employer fired her. To complicate matters, this young woman's husband had been terminated from his new job of 2 months because the employer felt that "it wouldn't work out." And, if that wasn't enough, the mother, who has an older child in custody of her ex-husband, was notified that she may be put in jail for 6 months for non-payment of child support. After hearing about these challenges from our clients on a regular basis, I certainly am not surprised by the need for food pantries in our county.

I urge you to pass SB 353 to ensure that our working families can continue to be a valuable part of our work force and can do so knowing that they and their families have adequate food. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Karen Tredwell
Executive Director, Food Pantry of Waukesha County

Have Karen T. talk/some follow up /Hr. to Committee

Position history



March 8, 2000

The Honorable State Senator Judy Robson
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
Wisconsin State Senate
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

I am writing to you, as Chair of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging, to support Senate Bill 353 (SB 353). This bill provides valuable funding to Wisconsin food pantries, our State's front line of defense towards abating hunger. Specifically, SB 353 provides \$1.5 million each year over the current biennium to support the administrative, technical, and infrastructure costs food pantries face in effectively feeding Wisconsin's hungry families.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Wisconsin is the largest charitable food distribution organization in Wisconsin. As a vital link in food distribution to the hungry, we procure donated and purchased food and grocery products from over 350 manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and growers and distribute those products to 1,100 charitable feeding programs in Wisconsin. Last year alone, we distributed over 10 million pounds of food.

MILWAUKEE
1700 W. FOND DU LAC AVENUE
MILWAUKEE, WI 53205-1299
414.931.7400
FAX 414.931.1996
OUTSIDE OF MILWAUKEE
1.800.236.1208

▼ ▼ ▼

FOX VALLEY
1436 PROGRESS LANE
OMRO, WI 54963-0433
920.685.6626
FAX 920.685.6639
OUTSIDE OF FOX VALLEY
1.888.643.7074

▼ ▼ ▼

FOOD THAT
BRINGS HOPE

Hunger in Wisconsin is real, Senator Robson. An estimated 354,000 individuals are receiving food from programs supplied by Second Harvest Food Bank of Wisconsin. This represents 7% of Wisconsin's population. Our food bank recently conducted research within our network which shows that 43% of the food pantries, soup kitchens and meal programs served by our food bank were forced to stretch their food resources. In fact, the study indicates that an additional 1.8 million pounds of food is needed each year to feed current requests for food. The daunting task of feeding the hungry is highlighted by the fact that more than half of the food programs we surveyed were small, with a median total income of only \$2,250. **This implies that half of all responding food programs operate on less than \$2,250 annually.** And despite our success in assisting the efforts of charitable programs to feed the hungry, 26% of our food programs still had to turn away people.

SB 353 is a significant step forward to win the fight against hunger in Wisconsin. It is remarkable, given the limited resources of emergency food

Senator Judy Robson
March 8, 2000
Page 2

programs, what we have accomplished so far. Yet, more needs to be done.
We urge you and the Committee to pass this important legislation.

If there are further questions you may have, I can be reached at 414-931-7400. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,


Bonnie J. Bellehumeur
President/CEO

Attachments: Annual Report
Hunger: The Faces and Facts



2802 Dairy Drive
Madison, WI 53718
(608) 223-9121
Fax (608) 223-9840

March 8, 2000

Senator Judy Robson
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

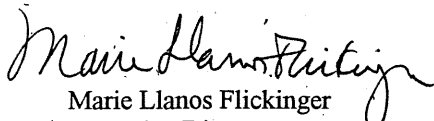
Dear Senator Robson:

Thank you for co-sponsoring SB 353 which provides \$1.5 million annually in badly needed support for food pantries in Wisconsin. Second Harvest Foodbank serves 150 food pantries in seventeen counties in southern Wisconsin. In 1999, we distributed nearly 2 million pounds of food to these food programs that are doing an incredible job when serving those at risk of hunger. Some of the rural food pantries that we serve are faced with daily challenges to meet the increased demand for emergency food assistance. The Sauk Prairie food pantry for example has seen a 50% increase in demand in the last year.

Because many of the food pantries in our service area operate with limited food budgets and have no paid staff, they are in most cases unable to meet the increasing demand for food prevalent among working families that rely on their assistance for meals that they would have otherwise skipped. We would like to see these food programs become more responsive to the changing needs of the population they serve. For this to happen, the food programs will need to operate with a food budget that allows them to hire some paid help and purchase the refrigerator or freezer to store the food they will give to needy families. This can only happen if these food programs get the money from SB 353.

Please continue to support SB 353 to allocate the \$1.5 million to help food pantries provide the services needed by hungry and needy families in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,


Marie Llanos Flickinger
Executive Director



Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin

Fact Sheet (1999-2000)

2802 Dairy Drive
Madison, WI 53718
(608) 223-9121
Fax (608) 223-9840

Mission: To feed the hungry in southern Wisconsin by acquiring food and related products and distributing them to qualified non-profit organizations; by providing those programs with appropriate assistance; by acting as a resource for information related to fighting hunger; and by developing partnerships with others who work on hunger issues.

History: The foodbank was established in 1986 by volunteers who saw the need for helping the needy and hungry people in our area. The volunteers, who later became the founding board of directors, started by collecting food donations from manufacturers and the public and distributing them to people in need. Since its inception, the foodbank has distributed over 19 million pounds of food to over 260 member agencies offering a meal site, food pantry, or shelter to the residents of their communities who are in need of nutritious meals. In many cases, even though these people are working, they are unable to provide enough food for their family's needs.

In January 1996, after receiving grants from several foundations, CDBG funds and donated land, the foodbank moved to its current location on Dairy Drive in Madison and doubled its operation size. Our facility has a 25,000 square foot warehouse, a 48,000 cubic foot freezer and a 24,000 cubic foot cooler. These additions have made it easier to run a more efficient operation and more convenient for our member clients who enjoy the convenience of a larger shopping space, greater quantities and more diversified assortment of food items.

Food Distribution: Each month the foodbank distributes nearly 180,000 pounds of donated food to 260 non-profit charities that serve hungry people in southern Wisconsin. In 1999, 2.3 million pounds of food were distributed to our clients. We estimate that in 2000, nearly 2.8 million pounds of food will be distributed to agencies and organizations working toward the common cause of eliminating hunger in our communities.

Funding Sources: While there is no charge for the food, each member contributes a service fee of .14 cents per pound to cover transportation and storage expenses. Other funding sources include individual and corporate contributions. The foodbank is also a United Way participating agency.

Food Fund Grants: In 1999, 40% of all food was distributed with no service fee to food pantries, shelters, and on-site feeding programs. Contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations support this program.

Food Donors: Over 100 food manufacturers, distributors, retailers, growers, wholesalers, and the general public donated 3 million pounds of food in 1999.

National Membership: We are one of 189 members of America's Second Harvest Foodbank Network, the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization. In 1999, the Second Harvest National Network distributed over one billion pounds of donated food and grocery products through member food banks that served 50,000 charitable feeding programs nationwide. Almost 26 million recipients benefited from food donated to Second Harvest.

**HUNGER
TASK
FORCE**

of Milwaukee

SINCE 1974

March 6, 2000

State Senator Judy Robson, Chair
Committee on Human Services and Aging
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Robson:

Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee (HTFM) is writing in support of Senate Bill 353, a bill that would provide funding for food pantries in Wisconsin. We are very thankful that you have scheduled this critically-needed legislation for a public hearing.

HTFM is a private, non-profit organization that distributes food to over 80 food pantries in Milwaukee County through our Emergency Food Pantry Network. From 1998-1999, this network experienced a 15% increase in the number of people served, and from 1996 to 1999, the network saw a 30% increase. We are currently serving over 40,000 individuals per month through this network, which is the largest number of people we have served in our 25-year history.

HTFM supports Senate Bill 353 because there is a clear need to fund the front line of hunger relief providers throughout our state. We know from surveys within our network of 83 pantries that the vast majority of pantries are operated by volunteers, utilizing donated space and equipment. Typically supplies of food are garnered through food drives or purchases of food from wholesalers.

Increased demand for emergency food is forcing many of these groups to turn away families in need of help when supplies of food run low or volunteer labor is not available. Senate Bill 353 provides the means by which groups committed to fighting hunger can gain access to the basic resources they need to provide emergency assistance.

Hunger Task Force is aware that emergency pantries that operate in other states receive public support in order to operate. With all of the resources focused on ensuring that dependent families gain employment, it seems reasonable that some resources could be committed to providing essential nourishment to working poor families—the single greatest users of emergency food.

We look forward to working with you on this legislation, and thank you again for scheduling a public hearing. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

201 S. Hawley Court

Milwaukee, WI 53214

tel: 414 777-0483

fax: 414 777-0480


Sherrie Kay
Executive Director



Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

322 East Washington Avenue ♦ Madison, WI 53703-2834

608-255-7399 ♦ FAX 608-255-7395

loppw@ecunet.org ♦ slarson@itis.com

Rev. Sue Moline Larson, Director

HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING SENATOR JUDY ROBSON, CHAIR HEARING ON SIB. 353, FUNDING FOR FOOD PANTRIES State Capitol, Room 201 SE, March 9, 2000

Dear Senator Robson and committee members,

Thank you for accepting testimony on SIB. 353, legislation to provide \$3M in the biennium for food pantries in Wisconsin. I am Rev. Sue Moline Larson, the legislative advocate for the six synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with congregations in Wisconsin. I speak in favor of S.B.353.

In a recent survey conducted by the ELCA Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs and the Division for Church in Society, social ministry organizations and congregations named food as the number one item requested by people coming to them for emergency assistance. With cutbacks in the Food Stamp program, underutilization by those who qualify, discouragement in remaining in the program due to the administration of W-2, and a general lack of information or the complicated process of continually re-qualifying, many people do not access the Food Stamp program or the Women, Infant and Children Program.

The consequence is that increasing numbers of individuals and families turn to emergency food pantries for assistance. For many each month's income is inadequate to pay for health needs, housing and transportation. The only area of flexibility is for food, and the pantry becomes a necessary partner in keeping hunger at bay. Hunger advocates in many states are urging passage of the federal Hunger Relief Act which will make Food Stamps available for families whose shelter costs are 50% or more of their monthly income. That bill, however, has not been approved. In this area, housing is at least 15% higher than in surrounding areas, and the lack of affordable housing is an issue that plagues families statewide.

Economic conditions have been lauded as bring increased prosperity to people in the state and nation, but it has left many people behind. Neither the state nor federal government has been willing to increase the minimum wage to keep up with cost of living increases, and a full-time minimum wage worker does not earn enough to keep a family with children above the federal poverty level. The situation of low-wage workers in Wisconsin is reflected by the growing gap in income and assets of low versus middle and upper income people.

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy released research last month which reveals that, while the upper fifth of income earners in the state have seen their income soar over national averages, the lowest fifth of Wisconsin earners have been left far behind. The surge for upper-income people was matched by an actual decrease for low-wage families. In fact, inequality in Wisconsin grew twice as fast as in neighboring states. In addition,

wage inequality by race has surged. COWS figures show that black men's wages have fallen by 33% in the last twenty years, and black women's by 27%. This disparity is significantly higher in Wisconsin than in the rest of the United States.

It is not surprising then that nearly 40% of food pantry and meal program clients are working people whose work does not pay enough to feed their families. Food bank surveys show that the need for emergency food has increased by 15-20% in the last year, and nearly 40% of those served are children.

There are a number of reasons that food pantry assistance is especially needed in Wisconsin. We have the highest level of decline in Food Stamp usage, and the people who use Food Stamps are now in transition to a more complex system of electronic benefit transfer cards. While this system may be more user-friendly in the long run for both participants and grocers, in the process of making the change for counties continues to be problematic, as the first pilot in Rock County indicated.

More important, I believe, is the philosophy of the Department of Workforce Development that the private, often faith-based, sector of the community would be ~~a~~ necessary and important in providing services to those families involved in or left out of welfare reform. This expectation by the department has not included the reality that the private sector does not have the capacity to meet all the needs of those fairly or unfairly dealt with by W-2 agencies, or those who are adults without children but not able to apply for food stamps, or those impacted by cuts in the SSI program.

If the state expects emergency services in the private sector to aid those not served by government programs, that it needs to act in good faith and provide the assistance that food pantries need to adequately serve their clients. The now-defunded Community Hunger Prevention Grant program regularly received requests for funds for pantry equipment or vehicles for transporting food. Some pantries need to hire staff, or to expand their facilities. This bill will provide the funds for a more effective partnership to develop in many places, and will allow pantries to function more efficiently and effectively.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of S.B. 353 and support the important services of food pantries who provide a life-line for families with chronic needs or temporary crises throughout Wisconsin. Thank you.



"For these are all our children . . .
we will all profit by, or pay for,
whatever they become." James Baldwin

Senate Bill 353
Senate Committee on Human Services & Aging
March 9, 2000

Chairwoman Robson, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity on the behalf of the Wisconsin Council of Children and Families to testify in support of Senate Bill 353 regarding increased funding for food pantries. My name is Anne Medeiros.

While the Council generally favors legislation that promotes long-term solutions, we recognize the current need for additional food pantry funding and support SB 353 for several reasons. First, while participation in the food stamp program has decreased, food assistance demands have increased for emergency pantries. A report by the U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO) shows that food assistance has increased in the areas of free school lunches and emergency food assistance, even though food stamp program participation has declined. In Wisconsin, food stamp participation has decreased 31.9%, the highest among all states, compared to the national average of 22.5%. The GAO report suggests that this trend occurs, in part from reductions in TANF rolls. The report continues then states that although children's participation in the food stamp program has sharply dropped, the number of children living in poverty does not reflect this decline, indicating a growing gap between need and assistance. It is important to recognize that although people are no longer accessing food stamps, many are still eligible, but are meeting their needs elsewhere, including at food pantries. For example, a study performed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development showed that of former AFDC or W-2 recipients, 34%, were unaware that they might still qualify for food stamps.

Another reason that the Council supports SB 353 is that the families who are currently using food pantries are truly in need. In preliminary findings from a survey of

RESEARCH • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

food pantry users in 27 Wisconsin counties, coordinated by UW Cooperative Extension, results show that approximately 1/4 of respondents reported household incomes of under \$500/month, and more than 3/4 reported household incomes of under \$1000/month. Additionally, almost 1/3 of respondents reported having either a long-term or short-term disability or health problem that prevented them from working or from holding a better job. Most food pantries users also rely fairly heavily on pantry services: 60% report 4 or more visits in the past year, and 1/4 reported 10 or more visits. Finally, pantry users reported high levels of economic hardship. For example:

- . 9% reported having electricity cut off in past year
- . 18% report having phone turned off in past year
- . 22% report having not been able to afford needed health care for self in the past year
- . 23% report that, in the past year, an adult in household skipped meals because of not having enough food.

In conclusion, SB 353 is an assurance that the families in most serious need who have slipped through the safety net of the food stamp programs will continue to receive nutritional food. Thank you for this opportunity to present this information, and I hope together we can ensure access to needed food pantry services for healthier families.



Wisconsin Community Action Program Association

1310 Mendota Street, Suite 107, Madison, Wisconsin 53714-1039

608/244-4422

FAX 608/244-4064

Testimony on SB 353

Senate Committee on Children and Families
Senator Judy Robson, Chair

March 9, 2000

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) represents Community Action Agencies that directly operate 50 food pantries and provide support to more than 160 others. Their efforts, heavily supported by volunteers, play a vital role in preventing hunger for thousands of Wisconsin citizens by delivering 3-4 million pounds of federal commodities a year, in addition to even greater amounts of food from the private sector.

Community Action Agencies and other organizations strongly support SB 353 because low-income households that depend on food pantries are truly in need - 70% earn less than \$10,000 a year, 39% are children, and one in three must choose between buying food and paying the rent or mortgage. Unfortunately, many food pantries are facing an increase in demand that is stressing their capacity to serve these families. Declines in cash assistance and food stamps have far outstripped declines in the state poverty rate, contributing to this trend. From January 1996 to July 1999 food stamp enrollments declined 40% in Wisconsin - the highest in the nation. But according to the Census Bureau the number of people living in poverty in Wisconsin dropped by only 1.3% (from 95/96 to 97/98). For comparison's sake the food stamp program brought \$210 million in benefits to low-income citizens in 1995, but only \$126 million by 1998.

Because families are still in need but receiving fewer federal resources, they turn to emergency food providers to help fill the gap. Many pantries have subsequently reported significant increases in pantry usage. For instance the Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency reported a 37% increase from 1997 to 1999. *WISCAP's analysis of data from 149 food pantries in 55 counties found a 24% increase in demand in 1997 alone. A pantry survey published by Miller Brewing the same year reported that 62% of hunger relief providers felt hunger had increased in their local area in the past 5 years.*

Unfortunately food pantries often lack sufficient financial resources, equipment, food, and/or volunteers. This in turn can force pantries to reduce food or access, translating into increased hunger. Recent surveys in Dane, Waukesha, and Brown Counties found that half of adults (45% to 58%) using pantries and other food programs still had to skip meals or reduce meal portions because they did not have enough money for food. Many reported their children had to take these steps.

In a state as prosperous as Wisconsin it is unacceptable that some families experience hunger or uncertainty about getting enough to eat. Food pantries need state funds to help them meet the challenges they now face as we work toward solutions that go beyond emergency food.

SB 353 will enhance the capacity of food pantries to leverage greater support from the private sector by enabling pantries to purchase needed equipment to handle additional private donations, especially perishable food. It will assist with transportation, storage and food processing to help pantries maximize food resources, will help cover administrative costs of coordinating food drives, expanding hours, or finding volunteers.

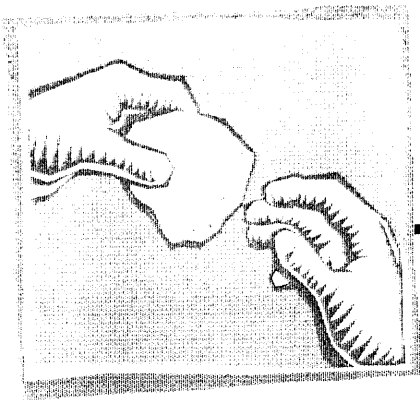
Though pantries are working to address hunger, resources are limited, especially in rural areas. The rural set-aside will help pantries in outlying areas to better meet the challenges they face. For example, the Sauk Prairie Food Pantry that has seen a 50% increase in demand in the last year, or the Indianhead Food Pantry in Burnett County that has difficulty obtaining sufficient local food donations, or food pantries in the 9 counties served by NEWCAP in northeastern Wisconsin that have experienced substantial increases in demand.

At the USDA's national summit on hunger Secretary Glickman called on state and local governments, community organizations, and businesses to forge a true partnership with national efforts to cut the incidence of hunger in half by 2015. We ask you to join us in reducing hunger in Wisconsin by passing SB 353. For more information please contact Jonathan Bader, Food Security Coordinator, 608-244-9320.

The following is a partial list of organizations that support SB 353

Kraft Foods, Inc.
Southwestern Community Action Agency (*Dodgeville*)
Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin (*Madison*)
Western Dairyland (*Independence*)
Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (*Lake Delton*)
Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency (*Kenosha*)
NEWCAP (*Oconto*)
West CAP (*Glenwood City*)
Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
Midwest Anti-Hunger Network
Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin
Second Harvest Food Bank of Wisconsin
SHARE of Wisconsin
Hunger Prevention Council of Dane County
Wisconsin Catholic Conference
Wisconsin Community Action Program Association
Wisconsin Council of Churches
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Wisconsin Immigrant & Refugee Coalition
Wisconsin Interfaith IMPACT
Wisconsin Jewish Conference
Shalom Center of the Interfaith Network (*Kenosha*)
First Congregational Church (*Hillsboro*)
Portage Food Pantry (*Portage*)
Love, Inc. (*Burlington*)
Chippewa Falls Food Pantry (*Chippewa Falls*)
Kennedy Heights Community Center (*Madison*)
Necedah Food Pantry (*Necedah*)
Marquette County Food Bank (*Montello*)
Care and Share Food Bank
Open Cupboard (*Osceola*)
Resurrection Lutheran Church Food Pantry (*Green Bay*)
Federated Church of Green Lake (*Green Lake*)
St Peter Claver Church Food Pantry (*Sheboygan*)
Birnamwood Area Community Cupboard (*Birnamwood*)
Bloomer Community Food Pantry (*Bloomer*)
Community Industries Corporation (*Stevens Point*)
Dane County Food Pantry Network
Racine County Food Bank



Birnamwood Area Community Cupboard Inc.

P1370 South Pole Road Birnamwood, WD 54414

(715) 449-2387

FEB 28 2000

Gentlemen:

Please add our Food Pantry to the
list that are endorsing Bill SB353.

Food pantries do so much to help
low income families in our area.

Suzanne Schmidt
Treas.

Birnamwood Area
Community Cupboard Inc.


February 29, 2000

MAR 03 2000

WISCAP
1310 Mendota Street
Suite 107
Madison, WI 53714

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to inform you that the Food Pantry sponsored by St. Peter Claver Church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin endorses the the proposed SB353 in the State Senate. Please add the St. Peter Claver Food Pantry to the list of those endorsing this bill. Thank you for your efforts in this worthwhile effort.

Sincerely,

St. Peter Claver Parish
Food Pantry

Mar 1, 2000

MAR 03 2000

WISCAP

Please support SB 353.

As a volunteer at our local food pantry, I see a great need for this bill to pass.

Thank you - Marianna Lewis

N 5505 Hwy. Y
Montello, WI 53949

608-297-2499

From: Nyla Pavelec <pavelec@vbe.com>
To: JBADER@CHORUS.NET <JBADER@CHORUS.NET>
Date: Wednesday, March 01, 2000 8:59 PM
Subject: RE: Bill SB 353

WISCAP

PLEASE ADD OUR GROUP:

THE FEDERATED CHURCH OF GREEN LAKE
AS ENDORSING THIS BELL.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK.

FROM: FEDERATED CHURCH
NYLA PAVELEC
CHAIRPERSON, DIACONATE COMMITTEE

From: Creidcole@aol.com <Creidcole@aol.com>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Wednesday, March 01, 2000 8:47 PM
Subject: SB353

Resurrection Lutheran Church Food Pantry
1024 Shawano Avenue
Green Bay, Wisconsin 54303

endorses bill SB353.

From: Rosanne Anderson <notjusttaxes@centurytel.net>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Tuesday, February 29, 2000 2:39 PM
Subject: Bill

Please add to the list of endorsers of the bill for food pantries that is in State Legislature

The Open Cupboard
PO Box 541
Osceola WI 54020

I am the director and we at the Open Cupboard support this bill.
Thank You,
Rosanne Anderson

From: Ruth Fry <frye@mymailstation.com>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Monday, February 28, 2000 5:43 AM
Subject: SB 353

As a volunteer worker at the Necedah Food Pantry, and a Necedah resident for most of my 83 years, I see the need for the service the Pantry provides. The goods the qualified people take home are staples and nutritious canned and packaged foods-not the fatty, salty, sugar loaded things which fill shopping carts at the stores. Much of it is from church and club donations. Please help. Ruth FRY, P.O. BOX 308
Necedah, Wi. 54646

2/28/00

From: Joan Mulvey <mulveys@maqs.net>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Thursday, February 24, 2000 3:39 PM
Subject: SB 353

To whom it may concern,

The Marquette County food bank in 1999 had over 500 families registered to participate in the food distributions. Our county is 67th in the State in per capita income and many of our people depend on the local food bank. Our 50 active volunteers have the support of community churches, service clubs, veterans organizations and youth groups.

We strongly support SB 353 which would provide funds to purchase additional food

Joan Mulvey

Director

Marquette County

Department of Human Services

From: John Brigham <jbrigham@tds.net>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2000 8:06 PM
Subject: bill sb353

THE NECEDAH FOOD PANTRY (P. O. BOX 116) NECEDAH, WI
WISHES TO BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF THOSE ENDORSING THE
SB 353 BILL PENDING IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE. WE HAVE
PASSED THE LITERATURE ON TO CHURCH GROUPS SO THEY CAN
ALSO ENDORSE THE BILL. THANK YOU.

GLADYS BRIGHAM - DIRECTOR OF
THE NECEDAH FOOD PANTRY

2/28/00

From: Kennedy Heights <kennedyheightscommunitycenter@yahoo.com>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Friday, February 25, 2000 9:24 AM
Subject: support for SB 353

I am writing to add our organization to your list of supporters for the bill (SB 353):

Kennedy Heights Community Center
199 Kennedy Heights
Madison, WI 53704

Thank you,

Bob Harlow

Do You Yahoo!?
Talk to your friends online with Yahoo! Messenger.
<http://im.yahoo.com>

From: Pastor Curt Rohland <curland@win.bright.net>
To: dan.rossmiller@legis.state.wi.us <dan.rossmiller@legis.state.wi.us>
Cc: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Sunday, January 23, 2000 12:45 PM
Subject: food pantry bill LRB 1603

Please bring to the attention of Senator George the following statement of one of the members of my congregation who has asked me to e-mail her statement for her. She does not have a computer at her disposal for e-mail use.

Dear Senator Georg: Our local Chippewa Falls food pantry board supports LRB 1603. Any help we can get would be appreciated. Thank you.

Vivian Slater, Board Member
Chippewa Falls Food Pantry
Box 971
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

(715) 723-1519

W4394 County Road C
Montello, Wi 53949
Feb. 28, 2000

WISCAP
1310 Mendota St., Suite 107
Madison, Wi 53714

FEB 29 2000

Gentlemen/Ladies:

Ref.: SB 353

I am writing to ask your support of the above bill. As a regular volunteer of the Marquette County Food Bank I have an opportunity to see the needs of poor families here in Marquette County. We serve several hundred people, many of whom are elderly or homebound on limited incomes. This bill is important to them.

Please give the needy of our state your support.

Sincerely,

Eunice Hutchings

From: Charles Bradley <cbradley@palacenet.net>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Monday, February 21, 2000 9:24 PM
Subject: sb 353

Wiscap,

I got message about SB 353; it looks like LRB 1603. If so, you could count on Portage Food Pantry Inc being in favor. I have written our Assemblyperson Joan Wade Spillner. We believe that the need is greater in the urban areas. The Portage Food Pantry is nicely taken care of by the community. But I am sure in Madison the pantries seek grants and outside sources of help. I understand that Second Harvest is also seeking help.

Charles C Bradley Jr

Treasurer

Portage Food Pantry Inc.

2/22/00

From: roberta poirier <oma10@win.bright.net>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Tuesday, March 07, 2000 9:01 AM
Subject: SB353

Please add Bloomer Community Food Pantry to the list of agencies
endorsing this bill

Thanks

Bloomer Community Food Pantry
Fire Hall @ Oak Street
Bloomer, WI 54724

Mailing address
18713 80th Street
Bloomer, WI 54724

From: epictetus junior <jcurtis@uwsp.edu>
To: jbader@chorus.net <jbader@chorus.net>
Date: Tuesday, March 07, 2000 4:54 PM
Subject: SB 353

We realize that this is late but I have asked Jack Curtis to inform you of our support for Senator George's bill SB 353. If we can do anything to expedite things please let me know.

Paul Rice
Community Industries Corporation (a private, not-for-profit rehab service)
3116 Algoma Street
Stevens Point, WI
54481
(715) 344 4563

GOOD MORNING!

MY NAME IS SHERRIE KAY, I AM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HUNGER TASK FORCE OF MILWAUKEE. INCORPORATED IN 1974, HUNGER TASK FORCE IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT EXISTS TO ALLEVIATE AND PREVENT HUNGER IN MILWAUKEE. WE ALLEVIATE HUNGER BY PROVIDING SEVERAL MILLION POUNDS OF FREE FOOD TO OVER 100 LOCAL EMERGENCY FEEDING ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING: FOOD PANTRIES, MEAL PROGRAMS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS.

HUNGER TASK FORCE'S INTEREST IN THIS BILL STEMS FROM OUR WORK TO ASSIST THESE EMERGENCY FEEDING ORGANIZATIONS. IN 1998 WE CONDUCTED A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF OUR NETWORK OF PROGRAMS, INTENDED TO DETERMINE THE OVERALL ABILITY OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HUNGRY PEOPLE IN MILWAUKEE. MANY OF THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY ARE RELEVANT TO CONSIDERATION OF ^{SENATE BILL} AB 353.

WE FOUND THAT TWO-THIRDS OF OUR PROGRAMS ARE OPERATED SOLELY WITH VOLUNTEER LABOR. THIS KEY FINDING DIRECTLY INFLUENCES EVERY OTHER OPERATING ASPECT OF AN EMERGENCY PANTRY—HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION, POTENTIAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT CAN BE SERVED, EFFECTIVENESS IN RESPONDING TO CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD NEED, AND ABILITY TO SERVE PEOPLE IN NEED AT THE VERY TIME THEY ARE MOST DESPERATE.

^{SENATE BILL} AB 353 AUTHORIZES MINIMAL FUNDING TO PANTRIES SO THEY CAN ^{MEET OPERATIONAL} ~~HIRE STAFF~~. ^{COSTS} THIS PROVISION COULD SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE HOW PANTRIES ARE OPERATED; RESULTING IN DRAMATICALLY REDUCED INCIDENCES OF HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY. I CHALLENGE ANYONE TO IMAGINE WHAT IT IS LIKE TO HAVE NO FOOD FOR YOUR CHILDREN, VISIT A CHARITY AND DISCOVER THAT IT ISN'T PREPARED TO HELP YOU, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT ISN'T OPEN, OR DOESN'T HAVE FOOD.

A SECONDARY POINT WELL WORTH ESTABLISHING IS COMMUNITY DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. HUNGER TASK FORCE OF MILWAUKEE HAS EXPERIENCED 7-10% ANNUAL INCREASES IN DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY FOOD IN EACH YEAR SINCE 1996. SIMULTANEOUSLY, WISCONSIN HAS EXPERIENCED A 30% DECREASE IN PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. IT IS NO SECRET THAT THIS DECREASE IS, ~~AT LEAST IN PART~~, ATTRIBUTABLE TO CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY W-2. INTENTIONAL, UNINTENTIONAL—IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER IF STATE AGENCIES ARE NOT ALLOWING HOUSEHOLDS TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. WHAT MATTERS IS DEMAND. WHAT MATTERS IS HUNGER. IT IS EVER PRESENT, IT IS OVERWHELMING AND IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO FOIST THESE INCREASES UPON A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY WITHOUT PROVIDING SOME, BASIC RESOURCES.

ANOTHER QUESTION WORTH ASKING IS HOW DO WE COMPARE WITH OUR PEERS? WHAT DO OTHER STATES OR COMMUNITIES DO ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER? DO THEY ACTUALLY FUND EMERGENCY PANTRIES AS A MEANS OF ENSURING THAT BASIC NEEDS ARE MET? THE ANSWER IS YES. ACCORDING TO THE ^{US CONFERENCE OF MAYORS} 1999 STATUS REPORT ON HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS, CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS, SOUTH CAROLINA, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, PENNSYLVANIA, OREGON, AND RHODE ISLAND ALL UTILIZE STATE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE EFFORTS. THE QUESTION FOR WISCONSIN IS WHY ^{DONT WE?} NOT US?

PERHAPS MONEY IS A CONCERN. SOME MAY IMPLY WE SIMPLY DON'T HAVE THE CASH TO SUPPORT THIS ACTIVITY. AN ARTICLE IN THE MARCH 5TH ISSUE OF THE *MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL*, ENTITLED "STATE LOSES AT FEDERAL TAX GAME" SUGGESTS OTHERWISE. THE ARTICLE DETAILED OUR STATE'S INABILITY TO CAPTURE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WHICH WE ARE ELIGIBLE. I HIGHLIGHT THIS ISSUE BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THERE IS FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INFORMING LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY, APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND BENEFITS UNDER THE FOOD STAMP

PROGRAM. MOST PANTRIES PROVIDE SERVICES THAT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THIS FUNDING, INCLUDING DISTRIBUTING FOOD STAMP LITERATURE AT THEIR PANTRIES, PRE-SCREENING INDIVIDUALS, DESIGNING OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND MONITORING LOCAL AGENCIES' OUTREACH PERFORMANCE. IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT HUNGER IS ON THE RISE, WHILE FOOD STAMP CASELOADS DROP, IT MAKES SENSE TO EDUCATE PANTRY USERS ON AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES. WOULDN'T IT ALSO MAKE SENSE TO RECAPTURE OUR FEDERAL TAX DOLLARS INTENDED FOR THIS PURPOSE? PERHAPS CAPTURING THESE FEDERAL DOLLARS HELPS SUPPORT AB353.

IN CLOSING I RETURN TO THE ISSUE OF NEED. WE SIMPLY MUST FIND A WAY TO REDUCE PARTISAN BICKERING AND ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY DENIAL. AB 353 IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LEGISLATURE TO SHOW A STRONG COMMITMENT TO EMERGENCY FEEDING ORGANIZATION THAT HELP SO MANY WORKING FAMILIES IN COMMUNITIES ALL OVER WISCONSIN.



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
FROM: John Nuebscher
DATE: March 9, 2000
RE: Senate bill 353 – Food Pantries and Senate Bill 435 – Services for Non-custodial Parents

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference I urge you to support both SB 353 and SB 435.

SB 353 – Food Pantry Assistance. Despite the healthy economy and low caseloads for Wisconsin Works, many emergency food outlets continue to experience high demand. In our 1998 study of families participating in Wisconsin Work, we found that many parents continued to worry a great deal about having enough money to buy food. Further, reports from diocesan and parish leaders with whom I have spoken suggest that high demand at food pantries is not limited to Milwaukee but can be found in many places across the state. This legislation will be most helpful in places where the need for such assistance is most acute.

SB 435 – Services to Low-income Non-custodial Parents. As the bishops observed in their 1995 statement, *Reforming Welfare by Valuing Families*, policies should be crafted in ways that help parents meet their responsibilities to care and provide for their children. Aspects of the Wisconsin Works program that reduce or eliminate disincentives for families to stay together were a constructive element in this regard.

However, it is also necessary to assist non-custodial parents. For, even if they are not in the home, they retain a responsibility for involvement with their children and an obligation to support them. To the extent that W-2 services can make a non-custodial parent more capable of earning a living, these services can render the parent to be more capable of meeting his or her family rearing responsibilities. Perhaps, this can in some cases lead to family reunification.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on these bills.

Senator Judy Robson & Human Services and Aging Committee Members:

My name is Patti Daubs; I am President of the Hunger Prevention Council of Dane County. I am here to support SB 353. This legislation can greatly assist volunteer organizations throughout Wisconsin. I have coordinated such a program and know how important every bit of support is in accomplishing the work of providing emergency food supplies.

The demand for this help has increased despite the economic boom in Wisconsin. In conversation with service providers and residents in northern counties, support for emergency food assistance program is not being well supported for several reasons. In rural areas, there are fewer service providers, charities do not have a large base of support and many rural areas are economically depressed. We are seeing declines in welfare assistance; however, we are not seeing poverty statistics declining in like manner. People living at and below the poverty level in a metropolitan area are going to have a difficult time feeding their families and paying the rent. These people are increasingly looking to emergency feeding programs to help them "get by." Many of these families are very stressed. There is much evidence that points out that groceries is where families economize. However, that strategy can go only so far; eventually many hard-working people must seek emergency food assistance.

Many point out that charitable organizations are doing what they should be doing in helping neighbors. However, charitable organizations' resources are being stretched beyond their capabilities. With the decline in funding for federal food stamps and cash assistance, the demand for community services continues to increase.

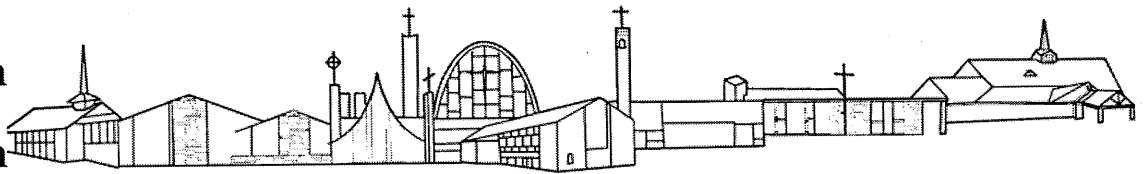
Research in Dane County indicates that many people receiving emergency food assistance are a vulnerable population. Single parent families and the disabled compose the majority of the households receiving help from the food pantries in a recent survey of food pantry clients.

Providing funding to reputable and well-run agencies can help these organizations to leverage local resources and do a better job in helping those in need in their communities. Charitable organizations CANNOT provide adequate emergency food assistance by themselves indefinitely. It behooves our state to partner with groups that exist to help those working poor families and disabled people.

While the passage of this legislation does not address the long-term problem of many people needing food assistance, this funding is needed while we continue to work on longer-term solutions. The Hunger Prevention Council of Dane County, Inc. continues to dedicate its work to address the long-term solutions to food insecurity. Helping people in our community to understand the issues surrounding food insecurity and helping low-income families to look at ways to help themselves with community support can be very important to people needing assistance.

3/9/2000

Middleton Outreach Ministry



More than a food pantry to the Good Neighbor City--Your one-stop shop for those in need
7432 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562 V: 836-7338; F: 836-0799; Email:
mompop@chorus.net

(Testimony To The Committee on Human Services And Aging Public Hearing Thursday March 9, 2000 regarding Senate Bill 353 relating to: funding for food pantries, granting rule-making authority and making an appropriation. Prepared and presented by Kermit M. Hovey, Jr., Middleton Outreach Ministry Food Pantry Coordinator.)

Hello and thank you all for this opportunity to address your committee. My name is Kermit Hovey and I am on staff with Middleton Outreach Ministry (MOM) as, among other roles, Food Pantry Coordinator. Ten congregations in the Middleton and West Madison area sponsor MOM and its efforts to serve the Middleton – Cross Plains area and parts of West Madison. Over the course of 1999 we distributed 84,000 pounds of food and household items to an average of 160 households / month. In January of 1995 we served 84 households and by the end of 1999 we served more than double that, at 176 households.

A line commonly attributed to Winston Churchill asserts that “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other forms of government.” I would like to offer a paraphrase, “Food pantries are the worst form of emergency food assistance, except for all the other forms of emergency food assistance.”

It is sad to say that this paraphrase is TRUE largely because Food Pantries are the **only** form of emergency food assistance. In Dane county we have a holey (and by that I do not mean sacred) safety net of neighborhood community center closets and church basement storerooms staffed by volunteers and stocked with an odd lot assortment of donated food made available in an ad hoc and improvised way during scattered and seemingly unpredictable schedules, altogether making a valiant effort to catch the hungry poor.

Yet, more daunting still for those of us who are active in Food Pantry work is the fact that for all too many people the Food Pantries are more than sources of emergency food, they are sources of regular essential food.

Why do we see both emergency and regular needs for food assistance? I do not know completely. There is no one reason. Typically there are many factors, different for each person. Consider it this way. We Food Pantries are like a bunch of First Aid Stations scattered around the state. We treat people staggering in with bleeding cuts and wounds by handing out band-aids. Their wounds are hunger and more, our band aids are bags of food. As we Food “First Aid” workers talk with the wounded and look outside we hear about and we see broken glass all over the sidewalks and streets. The people are falling on and getting cut by “sharp glass shards” such as: inadequate W-2 assistance, lack of participation with food stamps, distribution problems with the new food debit card, lack of living wages, lack of affordable housing, substance abuse, poor life decisions, and surprise health care or auto repair expenses. If we Food Pantries are the best form of emergency food assistance, then until we as a society figure out how to both get the “broken glass” off the streets and help people not fall on this “glass”, we Food Pantries will need all the help and assistance we can get.

MOM does not lobby or advocate, but we do serve and, where appropriate, educate. My final educational point is simple: ***We Food Pantries need resources and assistance to care for the hungry poor. If this bill is the best we as a State can do, we Food Pantries will appreciate it and will use it to the best of our ability to care for the “wounded”, the hungry, the poor. Thank You Very Much.***